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INTRODUCTION

Industrial society is an integral part of the social organism, and its evolution is necessarily determined by those conditions which determine the evolution of society as a whole. In the course of European history many diverse phases of industry present themselves, but these always appear in strict harmony with the period of history to which they belong. In the development of industrial life from village-communism to that which showed itself in the Medieval guilds, from the guilds to the age of national competition, and from thence to the present *régime* of individual competition, each change has been accompanied by corresponding changes in law, in politics, and in the arts. And however strange these old industrial systems appear to modern eyes, they find a true defense in the conditions from which they sprang.

But it is not sufficient to conceive of an industrial system as the product of the age in which it exists. It is not alone a resultant factor; it is a causal factor as well. Whatever affects the methods of production and distribution tends, not only to revolutionize politics, but also to change existing social arrangements and to modify ethical ideas. Nothing illustrates this better than the social effects of machinery. In England, the development of machinery was followed by changes that were truly revolutionary in character. The yeoman who played

such an important part in the Puritan Revolution, and whose presence gave a peculiar charm to the rural economy of England, was forced out of society. Large factories arose and population began to crowd the towns. The seat of industry was shifted from the South to the North, and the industrial processes became diversified as well as localized. The commercial spirit which had first shown itself in the sixteenth century came to dominate the nation. Side by side with accumulated wealth, the working class, as it is now known, sprung up and became an important social factor. All these changes were accomplished within the short space of half a century. So striking were these changes that Gaskell, writing in 1833, says "A complete revolution has been effected in the distribution of property, the very face of a great country has been remodelled, various classes of its inhabitants utterly swept away, the habits of all have undergone such vast alterations, that they resemble a people of a different age and generation."¹

This industrial revolution may properly be described, to borrow the terms of a socialist, as the transition from the *Labour-régime* to that of *Capitalism*. It left society in a chaotic condition, and brought forth the new ideal of life which Carlyle indignantly denounced as the age of "working mammonism," in which "*cash payment*" is the sole "union-bond of man to man."² But the new era is itself transitional. Labor and capital, whose harmonious working is essential to material progress,

¹ *The Manufacturing Population of England*, p. 33.

² *Past and Present*, p. 126.

can not retain their present strained relations for any considerable period of time. There must emerge sooner or later from the agitations now engaging the attention of the Western world an adjustment which will again bring harmony and peace to Western society.

But we are not at present concerned with speculations suggested by European history. The object of the present paper is to trace the industrial transition now in progress in Japan, to suggest some measures by which the process of transition may be facilitated, and to speculate upon the consequences which are likely to follow in a society so long accustomed to primitive methods of industry. Those who are acquainted with the recent history of Japan will not doubt the pertinency of such inquiry. Until thirty years ago, Japan was under the rigid rule of Feudalism. The country was divided into sixty-four provinces, each having its own government, its own finance, its own money. Whether small or large, each of these provinces constituted an organism, independent industrially as well as politically. Each produced and consumed, increased and decreased, flourished and declined, independently of the others. Each was dominated by a feudal lord, with his body of retainers, who were supported with feudal grants. Below these there were traders, artisans, and farmers, who worked primarily for the welfare of the ruling classes, by whom they were held in contempt. The land was burdened with heavy taxes, and industry was held subservient to military purposes. However beneficent the Feudal system may have been in its historical functions, its social organization and current ethics were such that "no large and varied economic activity was possible."

How that Feudalism was overthrown ; how the local independence was destroyed ; how the whole country was united under the authority of a strong central government, it is no part of my present paper to relate. From these changes in political relations, many admirable results have followed. Communication has been opened, class-distinction has been abolished, intellectual activity has been stimulated. In fact a new ideal of life has been introduced, which is steadily yet unconsciously asserting itself in the very heart of the nation. But it is important to recognize that the present industrial organization is still the relic of Feudalism. As we shall see later, the distribution of population is mainly determined by feudal boundaries, the movement of working classes from one province to another being little, or none at all. The land-tax is still the basis of national revenue ; agriculture is left to the hands of poor and ignorant tenants ; and manufacture is pursued by the same methods and with the same tools as of old.

It is apparent that Japan is at present but half-transformed. Modern political institutions have been imposed upon a people whose industrial organization is essentially feudal. But the best results cannot be hoped from such a step, if the changes are to be arrested with the adoption of democratic forms of government. Industrial methods must likewise be transformed. For it is only modern industry that can support modern institutions. Aside from religion, science, and philosophy, whose influence cannot be ignored, it is industry that has developed the principle of individualism, which, however pernicious it may be in some directions, is an essential phase of social progress. Hence only among indus-

trial people are free institutions realized. Again, it is modern industry alone that is capable of maintaining the enlarged functions of modern government. The growth of nationality, the complexity of governmental machinery, the rise of public industries, all are tending to increase the pecuniary demands of the state. It is obvious that the recent acts of Local Self-government, or the establishment of Legislative bodies in 1890, will increase the expenditure of the government, and if industry remain in its present condition, further advance of political liberty in Japan will be impossible.

Yet we have reason to believe that the present situation is purely transitory. The growing intercourse with European nations, the promulgation of new laws and of a constitution, by which the rights and liberties of all are equally secured, and, above all, the provisions for universal education through the establishment of more than thirty thousand schools, cannot fail to quicken the energy of the people and to impart to them a new ideal of life. Machinery, also, which plays so prominent a part in Western civilization, may be introduced into Japan, provided only the conditions of labor and capital are adjusted to admit it. These combined influences will in all probability shorten for us the transitional period, which occupied in Europe the space of more than a century.

Indeed the course of recent events fully warrants us in expecting sudden and violent changes in the industrial system. Between December, 1886, and September, 1887, thirteen railroad corporations were chartered with capital of over forty million dollars. Over one thousand miles of line were projected, a mile-

age far in excess of that previously constructed and projected by both the government and public corporations. Again, there have been built within a few years thirty-three spinning factories, with spindles varying from 2,000 to 60,000 each. In almost all branches of industry, corporations are being formed, and an intense interest is manifested by a class of intellectual men who once held themselves above the vulgarity of industrial pursuits. Such facts put it beyond question that the industrial energy of the people is fully awakened, and if strong measures be taken either in revenue reforms or in the revision of commercial treaties, labor will begin to move, machinery will be introduced, and Japan will certainly adjust herself to the requirements of modern industrial life.

If then it be proper to characterize the present as a period of industrial transition, it is necessary to give some attention to the solution of such questions as arise from this fact, for such transition carries with it possibilities of evil as well as of blessing. The sudden introduction of labor-saving machinery on a large scale into a country whose industry has grown independently of such potential factors, must cause serious disturbances, and when these disturbances are exaggerated by misgovernment, they are liable to engender social evils which may make civilization a curse to the multitude of the people. But modern industry has grown so far that by analyzing its history we may hope to ascertain how much of present social evils is traceable to human injustice, and how much to natural tendencies. In the light of such analysis we may perhaps discover the order in which the required changes can be accomplished,

attended by the least danger ; or, by comparing the Japan of to-day with the Japan of former times, we may discover the peculiar dangers to which the country is exposed, and the measures necessary to prevent them.

In order to discuss these questions to any advantage, it will be necessary to examine carefully the present industrial status of Japan, and to inquire into the distribution of population, and the conditions of agriculture, manufacture, and transportation. In doing this, we shall depend mainly upon statistics and upon various official reports.¹ These will furnish the data upon which to build our speculations. Our subject, therefore, will be treated in the following three divisions :

The present industrial status of Japan.

Steps necessary to complete the Industrial Transition.

The probable social consequences of the industrial transition.

¹ Annual Reports published by the Department of Interior, 1882, 1883, 1886, 1888.

Annual Reports of the Bureau of Statistics, 1887.

Report of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, 1887.

One accessible to French readers is *Rèsumè Statistique de L'Empire du Japon*, No. iii, Tokio, 1889.